

be a Boy Scout leader, to teach a child good values." It happens when somebody mentors a child and teaches them how to read.

The war on terror is a war we will fight on many fronts. It is a war we're going to win on many fronts. It's a war we'll win at home because this is a compassionate nation, full of decent and loving and caring people. And it is such an honor to be the President of the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth.

Thank you for having me. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the warehouse at the MFA Feed Mill. In his remarks, he referred to Roseann Blunt, wife of Representative Roy Blunt of Missouri.

### Remarks in New Orleans, Louisiana January 15, 2002

**The President.** Thank you all very much. It's great to be back in what they call the Big Easy. As you might remember, I grew up in Texas and spent some quality time here in New Orleans. I forgot how good the food is. I'm going to have to spend about a week working off that baked Alaska that I had at Antoine's. [*Laughter*]

I didn't have any pretzels last night for dinner. [*Laughter*] I learned my lesson: Always listen to your mother, who told me, "Chew your pretzels before you swallow." [*Laughter*]

But thank you all for coming. It is a beautiful day in a great city and an important part of our economy, and that is the Port of New Orleans. I want to thank Gary LaGrange, who is the executive director of this facility. I want to thank the Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, who is traveling with me. I want to thank the chairman of the Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners. I want to thank Dave Wagner. I want to thank Jim Campbell, who is the president of the International Longshoremen's Association Number 3000. I want to thank all the hardworking longshoremen who are here to help make America grow.

I want to thank my friend the Governor of the great State of Louisiana. What a piece of work that guy is. That's why they love you,

Mike. [*Laughter*] He knows how to tell the truth; he speaks plainly, and he's doing a heck of a good job for the people of Louisiana.

I want to thank Congressman David Vitter, who's here today. I want to thank Congressman John Cooksey, who is with us, as well. Thank you both for coming.

And I want to thank you all for coming out to say hello. It's a great way to end my trip throughout America's heartland. I started yesterday in Moline, Illinois, at a factory that makes harvesting equipment for John Deere. I told them I was coming down to New Orleans, and I said, "I'm going to come to the place where much of the equipment you manufacture is shipped out when you sell overseas."

And then I went to see some farmers in Missouri. And I told them that I was coming down to New Orleans in Louisiana, which ships out a lot of the product that they grow. The reason I'm here is because I want America to understand how our economy works. We're worried about jobs in our country. We want everybody who wants to find work to be able to have work; everybody who wants a job should be able to provide for their family. I'm worried about the loss of jobs.

Our economy is interconnected. What happens in Moline, Illinois, and in Missouri affects the people who work here in New Orleans, in the port. And therefore, good public policy recognizes that. And good public policy asks the questions, how do we make sure that what affects one affects the other in a positive way? How do we make sure people can find jobs as we head into the year 2000?

The best way to make sure that our economy recovers from the attack—I think one of the most important things I can do is to make sure that they don't hit us again. We suffered a lot on September the 11th, and one of the things that we suffered was the lack of confidence in the future. But as every day goes by, the American people are getting more and more confident in our ability to protect ourselves and the ability for our Government to respond in a positive way to make sure that families are safe in America.

I fully understand the enemy still lurks out there, and the enemy still would like to hit

us. But America has changed since September the 11th. We're now more alert. We've got a Coast Guard that's now actively patrolling our coasts, trying to make sure nobody comes in to hurt us. We've got an FBI—major function now is to prevent further attack. We've got better intelligence-sharing around the world to make sure that we find people before they come to our country. We're on full alert. I'm so proud of the law enforcement officials all across America who are working endlessly—who are working endlessly to make sure that we're safe.

This is a strong country. It's an alert country, and it's a patient country when it comes to achieving the ultimate objective, which is keeping America safe by finding terrorists where they live and bringing them to justice. And that's exactly what's happening in the first theater in the war against terror. I have unleashed a mighty military, and the mighty military of America is making us proud.

For those of you who wear our uniform, I want to thank you. For those of you who have got families—family members of those who wear the uniform, I hope you're as proud of them as I am.

We set a clear objective—several clear objectives. One of them was is that if you harbor a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you're guilty. That's the doctrine. The objective was to make sure that the Taliban no longer harbored Al Qaida. The Taliban no longer rules in Afghanistan. We met that objective, and in so doing, we liberated a group of people that had been terrorized—we liberated women and children. I'm so proud of the United States military.

It brings me such joy—such joy—to know that not only are we pursuing the objective—and that is to bring the murderers to justice—but this great Nation is liberating people and feeding people. We're not only a tough nation, but we're a compassionate nation. And the world has seen the greatness of America as we pursue our objective.

And we're making some progress against Al Qaida. We're hunting them down, one man at a time. I just want to tell you that I'm patient, and our military is patient; that I don't care how long it takes. I don't care where they hide; we're after them. And we're

after them and will remain after them until they're brought to justice.

Oh, I know there are some who are saying, "Gosh, I wish this ended yesterday." But that's not how this is going to work. You see, we've got people who send youngsters to suicide missions, and they, themselves, hide in caves. Those are the kind of people we're dealing with, but there's not going to be enough caves in the world to hide them.

Some may tire—some in our coalition may get tired of this effort, or some in our country may tire. But I can assure you, I'm not, because I view this as a moment—a defining moment in history, a moment when we must defend freedom, a moment when we must defend civilization, itself, a moment when this great Nation—in which this great Nation must lead the world—must lead the world—to make sure our children and grandchildren can grow up in a peaceful and secure society.

In order to make sure people can find work, we better make sure we educate the people of our country. I had the real privilege last week of traveling the country, touting a good education bill, a bill that is going to make sure every child gets educated and no children get left behind.

One of the things that I really, really appreciate about Governor Foster is that he understands that we better hold people accountable in education. Otherwise, some are going to get left behind. I'm real proud of the education reforms that Mike Foster has put in place.

I believe strongly, every child in America can learn. I believe that, and I believe our public school systems can teach every child in America how to read and write and add and subtract. And I took that message up to Washington and worked with both Republicans and Democrats to get a good bill out that sets high standards, that says, "If you take money, you need to show us whether or not children can read and write and add and subtract," a good bill that focuses on making sure every child is literate, a bill that helps teachers teach reading using a curriculum that works, and a bill that says the good folks of Louisiana can run their schools better than bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

And one of my traveling mates was Ted Kennedy, the Senator from Massachusetts.

I've said good things about him. [*Laughter*] He nearly fell out. [*Laughter*] So did the boys at the Crawford coffee shop. [*Laughter*] But I said it because he worked hard to get a good bill; he worked with a Republican administration to get a good piece of education reform. We showed what can happen in Washington when you put your political parties aside and focus on what's best for the United States of America.

And that's what's got to happen on this issue of trade. One of the reasons I'm traveling down the spine of America and on the mighty Mississippi is because I want to remind our fellow citizens how important trade is. It's important to these workers that we trade. The people who are loading these ships load them because we're trading around the world. The farmers who are selling product can sell more if we trade. And if the farmers sell more of their product, we can sell more of the machines made in Moline, Illinois, so the good folks up there, the UAW workers, can work.

I'm worried about jobs. And I believe if you trade more, there are more jobs available for hardworking Americans. There are some who play politics with the trade issue; they want to shut down trade. I like to remind people, those who shut down trade aren't confident. They're not confident in the American worker; they're not confident in the American entrepreneur; they're not confident in American products.

I'm just the opposite. I know we got the best workers in the world; I know we can make the best products in the world. And therefore, we ought to have free and fair trade around the world. I'm not the only one that feels that way. Some of the longshoremen that I met coming in said, "We need trade so I can keep working." I got a nice letter from your mayor. He said, you know, he's sorry he couldn't see me because he's on a trade mission to Mexico City, "however, I want you to know that I fully support your efforts to pass legislation giving your administration fast-track authority to negotiate trade agreements."

This isn't a Republican issue; this isn't a Democrat issue. Trade is a jobs issue. And the United States Senate needs to hear the

voices of the working people and get me a bill I can sign.

And you know what else the United States Senate needs to do? They need to pass an energy bill. One of the great things about our agriculture sector is, we grow enough food to feed America. And therefore, we're secure when it comes to food. Gosh, I would hate to be the President of a country that has to import a lot of food. It would mean you're beholden to somebody else's farmers to feed your people.

We grow a lot of food. We can feed our people. We grow enough that we can put it on the ships here and send it around the world, and we ought to be feeding the world, as well. But that's not the case for energy. We receive a lot of our energy, over 50 percent of it, from other parts of the world. Sometimes they like us; sometimes they don't. [*Laughter*] And it's those times when they don't like us that makes me nervous as the President of the country. [*Laughter*] It's in our national interest to have a national energy plan. It's in Louisiana's interest to have a national energy plan. It's in America's interest to have a national energy plan.

A national energy plan will help us conserve more and produce more. It will make us less reliant upon foreign sources of energy, and it will help us create more jobs. The people of Louisiana understand that energy equals jobs. So do a lot of other people in America. This bill is bottled up in the United States Senate. It's about time they focused on creating jobs in America and get me a trade bill and an energy bill for the good of the American people.

The good news is, I think we got a United States Senator—I know we've got one from Louisiana who understands that; John Breaux understands. He understands jobs, and I appreciated him supporting me on the tax cut.

And that's another good piece of legislation that passed out of Washington, and it came just at the right time—just at the right time. You see, our economy started slowing down significantly in March of 2001. And when the economy begins to slow down, one of the best remedies is to let people keep more of their own money, is to take less of the money from the working people.

When a longshoreman is able to keep more of his own money, his family has more money to spend. And as they spend that money, somebody, obviously, has to produce the product for them to buy. And as they produce the product, it creates jobs. And in order to stimulate the economy, one of the good ways to do so is to have tax relief. We passed meaningful, real tax relief that says, finally, our Government trusts people with more of their own money so that people can make the right decisions for their families.

You know, there are some in Washington, however, who seem to be indicating that in order to come out of a recession, you should raise taxes.

**Audience members.** No-o-o!

**The President.** I don't know what economic textbook they've been reading—[laughter]—but it's not the one that most Americans have read. They understand tax relief is the best way to encourage an economic recovery in America.

Now, we can help and should help those workers who lost their jobs as a result of the September the 11th attacks. We should work together to extend unemployment—insurance employment benefits. We ought to help pay for health care for workers that have been laid off; that's something we ought to do. But most Americans don't want an unemployment check. They want a paycheck, and we ought to figure out ways to increase jobs.

An energy plan will help create jobs; a trade bill will create jobs. And we need a stimulus plan that says, "Let's be smart. Let's encourage entrepreneurs and people who buy equipment, and let's accelerate the tax relief so that this economy will grow, so that people who want to work can find work." There is no reason why we can't work together to get a good bill done for the American people.

I like my job a lot. It's a huge honor to live in the White House, and I want to report that Laura is doing a fabulous job. What a great, great First Lady. She's happy, and that's really important. [Laughter] And it's an honor to represent you in Washington, but I really enjoy traveling our country, as well. I like to get out. I like to move around, because it is—one, it reminds me of the true strength of America. And the true strength

of our country is not in our Capital. We've got a great system; no question about it. We've got a fantastic Constitution. But the true strength of America really are the American people—is the American people. That's the true strength. The true strength is the American citizens, people of good heart.

The enemy didn't understand our country. You know, they thought we were so materialistic that we were soft. They thought we cared more about ourselves than we cared about something greater than ourselves. But they were wrong. They didn't understand the character of America. They don't know how tough we can be—they didn't realize how tough we could be if we decided to be tough. They thought we would be impatient, and they're wrong. They thought we'd get tired early. They don't understand us.

A lot of people say, "Well, what can I do to help fight the war on terror?" Well, one, be alert. If you see something happening that's unusual, report to the local law enforcement. Let them know. But the other thing is, is that in order to fight evil, I think one way you do it is to fight it with good—acts of kindness and decency. In order to fight the evil ones and not let their way of life stand, one thing Americans can do is to love a neighbor.

I want to not only unleash our military and the might of our military; I also want to help unleash the compassion of the American people. A soldier in the war on terror is somebody who mentors a child or somebody who walks across the street to a shut-in neighbor and says, "How can I brighten your day? What can I do to love you?" A soldier in the war on terror is a mom or a dad who surrounds—who hugs their children on a daily basis and says to a child, "I love you more than anything in life." Somebody who wants to fight evil with goodness is somebody who wants to get involved in their school system and praises the teacher or helps the education, somebody who goes to a church or a synagogue or mosques and says, "What can we—how can we form a faith-based program to help change people's lives by changing their hearts?"

The enemy has awakened a mighty nation. They made us angry, but they've also made us hopeful because we fully understand the

true strength of our country lies in the hearts and souls of a wonderful, fantastic group of people.

It is my honor to be your President. It's my honor to be here in New Orleans. May God bless you all, and may God bless America. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 a.m. on the Nashville Avenue Wharf at the Port of New Orleans. In his remarks, he referred to Gary P. LaGrange, executive director, and Dave A. Wagner, chief operating officer, Port of New Orleans; Francis E. "Hank" Lauricella, chairman, Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans; Gov. M.J. "Mike" Foster of Louisiana; and Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Proclamation 7517—Religious Freedom Day, 2002**

*January 15, 2002*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Religious freedom is a cornerstone of our Republic, a core principle of our Constitution, and a fundamental human right. Many of those who first settled in America, such as Pilgrims, came for the freedom of worship and belief that this new land promised. And when the British Colonies became the United States, our Founders constitutionally limited our Federal Government's capacity to interfere with religious belief by prohibiting the Congress from passing any law "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." These constitutional limits have allowed the flourishing of faith across our country, which greatly blesses our land.

George Washington forcefully expressed our collective constitutional promise to protect the rights of people of all faiths, in a historic letter he wrote to the Jewish community at Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island: "the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens . . . ." Today, our cities are home to synagogues,

churches, temples, mosques, and other houses of worship that peacefully welcome Americans of every belief. Preserving religious freedom has helped America avoid the wars of religion that have plagued so many cultures throughout history, with deadly consequences.

Today, as America wages war against terror, our resolve to defend religious freedom remains as strong as ever. Many miles from home, American service men and women have risked their lives in our efforts to drive the Taliban regime from power, ending an era of brutal oppression, including religious oppression. At home, Americans demonstrated the vitality of our religious freedom in the enormous outreach by faith communities to help those harmed by the terrorist attacks. In quiet prayers offered to God in churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques and in the helping hands of faith-based groups, Americans have shown a deep love for others and genuine spiritual unity that will sustain us through the difficult days of recovery.

Religious Freedom Day provides us an opportunity to celebrate America's commitment to protect the freedom of religion. On this special day, I encourage all Americans to renew their commitment to protecting the liberties that make our country a beacon of hope for people around the world who seek the free exercise of religious beliefs and other freedoms.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 16, 2002, as Religious Freedom Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day by asking for the blessing and protection of Almighty God for our Nation, and to engage in appropriate ceremonies and activities in their homes, schools, and places of worship as a sign of our resolve to protect and preserve our religious freedom.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

**George W. Bush**